

# The Family Heritage Series

A weekly discussion of Americanist truths and traditions for those "heirs of all the ages" who will have to preserve that most important inheritance of all — freedom. Produced by the Movement To Restore Decency.



Volume II

Lesson Seventy-One

## Karl Marx

### LESSON IDEA

To describe the background and character of the man known as the "father of Communism" and to dispel the myth that the *Communist Manifesto* was the product of his "brilliant" mind.

### PREPARATION

Read "During the Week" and adapt the project suggested to the needs of your family. Also, look up in your family *Bible* some of the teachings of the Book of Proverbs or the New Testament gospels which deal with parental discipline and an individual's character and training.

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«JENNY! IF WE CAN but weld our souls together, then with contempt shall I fling my glove in the world's face, then shall I stride through the wreckage a creator!" Thus read the impassioned proposal of marriage from a pretentious college student of a respected middle-class German family to the daughter of the aristocratic Baron von Westphalen. The student's name was Karl Marx; and although he never succeeded in his lifelong ambition of striding through the world as a creator, he did fling his glove of contempt in the world's face by serving a revolutionary movement that has brought untold suffering, misery, and death to millions of human beings.

Karl Heinrich Marx was born in Treves (or Trier), in what is now the Rhineland of Germany, on May 5, 1818. His ancestors had been outstanding scholars and rabbis. And although his father had broken with the Jewish faith, the story that Karl Marx was born in squalor and poverty is a colossal fraud — like so much that is accepted as fact by both his supporters

and his opponents. His father was a successful lawyer who could never understand or discipline his egocentric, ruthless son, but who did send him to the finest schools and universities of the day and who continued to supply him with money, like a schoolboy, even after Karl was an adult with a wife and children.

In his youth, Marx was known as an assertive, opinionated, and obstinate boy who, through his arrogance and cold indifference, drove away everyone who tried to be his friend. His father often apologized for Karl's behavior by saying the boy was "gifted" and, therefore, naturally "different," but do you think this excuses rudeness in a young man? What does this tell us about the character of Karl's father? [*Encourage a discussion of parental responsibilities. Raise the question of whether more or less discipline is needed for those of above average mental abilities.*]

Young Marx was a top student through the lower grades of school. By the time he entered college, however, his success in discussions and debates outshone his scholastic abilities. And once he discovered his talent for persuading others, he became a voracious reader, devouring huge quantities of books on almost any subject that could prove useful in arguments — regardless of their value to his classroom studies.

Although he was quickly accepted at the University of Bonn, almost immediately upon his arrival he began skipping classes and ignoring the required studies. He preferred, instead, the company of bohemian companions at local taverns. Although his father was suffering a terminal illness that drained

the family finances, Marx continually demanded money – allegedly to support his studies, but in fact to buy more drinks for himself and his new “friends.” After repeated warnings by the college authorities that he was about to be expelled for “nocturnal drunkenness and riot,” Marx decided to leave the campus at Bonn and enroll at the University of Berlin.

But his habits remained the same. Instead of seeking a stimulating, challenging course of study, he gravitated to the group of “intellectuals” who met informally under the name of the “Professors’ Club” at any beer parlor that would tolerate them. Marx’s ability to discuss at length the thoughts, writings, and philosophy of others – always modifying their ideas and parading them as his own inspired thinking, of course – made his new associates think they were in the presence of a true genius. No matter what the subject – Christianity, the profit motive, marriage, or the need to abolish private property – Marx’s prodigious memory, wide reading, and debating skills enabled him to present his warmed-over stew of radical statements as the latest in revolutionary thought.

**AS A RESULT**, the young parasite from Treves came to the attention of some of the most seasoned and sophisticated revolutionaries in the university. It was these men, in fact, who finally convinced Marx of the importance of getting a diploma instead of remaining a perpetual student and beer parlor debater. Realizing that his superiors at the University of Berlin might not be too enthusiastic about his revolutionary ideas – or his credentials for a degree in philosophy – his new mentors suggested he apply at the University of Jena. This institution was notoriously so lax that a degree could be obtained by correspondence; so Marx simply mailed his doctoral thesis to the school, and his degree was promptly returned to him. It is significant that the theme of the “learned” paper that earned for him the title of “Doctor” was anti-religious. In fact, he chose for its motto the cry of Prometheus: “In one word – I hate all the gods!” And now the mail-order Doctor Marx was ready to be introduced formally to some of the most important Socialists in Europe – the professionals who would guide him in the radical movement, teach him the philosophy of Com-

munism, and support him as a promising apprentice in revolution.

Can you see the connection between Marx’s anti-religious sentiments and his lack of responsibility and self-discipline? What do the Scriptures teach about self-discipline? [*Recall some of the teachings of the Book of Proverbs or the New Testament gospels which deal with an individual’s character and training.*]

Soon after receiving his degree, Marx was accepted on the staff of a leftist newspaper in Cologne, Germany. Within twelve months the twenty-four-year-old radical had been made editor of the publication; but after five months, he was once again unemployed; his articles and editorials were so subversive and revolutionary that the paper was closed by the government authorities. So far as historians have been able to determine, this was the only regular job Marx held in his entire adult life.

**IT WAS ALSO AT THIS TIME** that Marx met Friedrich Engels, the wealthy Socialist who would guide, defend, assist, and support him financially for the rest of his life. The devotion of the older Engels to Marx was so complete that he actually considered it an honor to be allowed to assume responsibility for Marx’s financial support – even borrowing from his own father to aid the younger revolutionary.

Within a few more months, Marx had firmly established his reputation as one of the most dedicated and enthusiastic revolutionaries in Europe. He had been forced out of Germany and expelled from France for proclaiming the need of violent revolution. For a short while, he and his wife – for he had finally won the consent of Baron von Westphalen to marry Jenny – made their home in

#### FOR SERIOUS STUDENTS

*Karl Marx, The Red Prussian* by Leopold Schwarzschild is one of the books we would recommend for a deeper study of this mail-order doctor of philosophy and his revolutionary ideas. Another is *World Revolution* by Nesta Webster and *The Naked Communist* by W. Cleon Skousen. *World Revolution* (\$4.00 paperback) and *The Naked Communist* (\$3.50 paperback) are available at most American Opinion Bookstores, or from American Opinion, Belmont, Massachusetts 02178.

Brussels, Belgium. At that time, Brussels was the center for many of the Socialist and Communist intellectuals in Europe. But then came the opportunity which Marx and Engels considered golden.

An effort had been underway for two years to unite all of the Socialist factions in Europe into one international organization. The conspiratorial group which was behind this unifying movement had been known under various names, including Federation of the Just and League of Just Men. By 1847, however, a more permanent and public name had been agreed upon for this international revolutionary apparatus: It would be called the Communist League. And its first task would be to issue a written statement, or manifesto, of the principles and purposes of the radical network.

Originally the task of codifying the principles for the Communist League had been assigned to Moses Hess, a prominent Socialist who had helped Marx rise to prominence within the radical movement. However, Marx and Engels – never men to honor a friendship if it stood in the way of their own ambitions – were determined to get the coveted writing assignment themselves, and at any cost. Which they did – by cunning politicking at the first congress of the Communist League, held in London in 1847, and by undercutting and discrediting other potential authors, including Hess. Such infighting among fellow radicals was – and is – common practice. Marx, in fact, reserved his worst curses, not for the capitalists he claimed to oppose, but for fellow revolutionaries who disagreed with him. One of his favorite epithets, for example, which was always reserved for those Socialists who dared to differ, was “dirty Jew of Negro blood.” Modern history books usually omit these facts about Karl Marx. Can you guess why? [*Encourage discussion. Have someone look up the dictionary definition of “conspiracy.” Emphasize the point that a conspiracy’s first task is to keep its existence secret, and to make everyone believe that the events it directs “just happen” or that they are the work of “one lone individual.” Explain that this is the reason Communism is always presented as the creation of Karl Marx, the “mistreated” individual who hated only capitalists.*]

Marx and Engels were ordered to have the new manifesto finished by January of 1848. The date was very important. As we will learn in later lessons, revolutions and insurrections had already

been planned throughout Europe to occur in the spring and summer of that year. And having common goals for all revolutionary governments was absolutely essential. Five basic ideas were to be included in the “Manifesto to the World.” None were new; all had travelled the radical beer parlor circuits, in one form or another, since 1776 when they were first expressed by Adam Weishaupt’s *Order of the Illuminati*. They were (1) the destruction of Christianity; (2) the abolition of private property; (3) the elimination of the family as a social unit; (4) the abolition of all governments; and (5) the establishment of a ruthless dictatorship or “new world order,” built on the ashes of all previous traditions and institutions.

**F**AR FROM BEING the proclamation of a lone and brilliant revolutionary, the *Communist Manifesto* was a party platform Marx was paid to write for the Communist League. And the fact that Karl Marx wrote it was considered so unimportant that his name did not even appear on it for twenty-four years after its original publication. We will examine this *Manifesto* in considerable detail in next week’s lesson. And while there is little doubt, as one author has said, that it was destined to become “the most widely read and influential pamphlet in the history of the world,” this was not because of Marx’s brilliance or originality but because a revolutionary organization existed then – and has grown enormously in the past 126 years – to implement the principles and programs Marx described.

Marx himself did not consider the *Manifesto* to be his finest or most important work. That honor was reserved for a book that would not appear for another twenty years – *Das Kapital*. But that massive tome, which was written to explain and justify two tenets that are basic to Communism – violent revolution against existing government and the need to establish a socialist economy – is so complex in its explanations, and so confusing in its presentation, that it is read today by only a handful of Marxists.

Even though the *Communist Manifesto* brought Marx the revolutionary prestige he had hoped it would when he and Engels fought so hard for the assignment, the revolutions which were designed to follow on the heels of its publication quickly fizzled



out. Marx's personal life followed the same pattern.

Contrary to the current Marxist myth, the "father of Communism" was not poverty-stricken. His mother had died, leaving him a sizable inheritance; an obscure German admirer, Wilhelm Wolff, had left him an even larger amount of money in his will; and Friedrich Engels had put him on a regular pension. His income, in fact, put him within the upper two percent of the population of England, where by this time he was living; yet he found it impossible to live frugally or to budget his money. While this alleged "humanitarian" travelled from one country to another to enhance his position in the inner circles of radicalism, his family often went without food or even the simplest household necessities.

In a letter to a friend, his wife described the family's life in London:

*One day I was sitting like this when our landlady suddenly appeared . . . . Since we could not pay . . . two brokers came into the house, and took possession of all my belongings — bedding, clothes, everything, even the baby's cradle and the little girls' toys, so that the children wept bitterly. They threatened to take everything away in two hours. (Fortunately they did not.) If this had happened I should have had to lie on the floor with my freezing children beside me . . . .*

*Next day we had to leave . . . . At length a friend helped us. We paid what was owing, and I quickly sold all my beds and bedding in order to settle accounts with the chemist, the baker, and the milkman.*

Karl and Jenny Marx had six children. Of these, one died at birth; a daughter and a son starved to death while still infants; and two other daughters lived wretched lives, finally committing suicide. Marx outlived the family he neglected in his feverish pursuit of fame, attention, and power. He died in March of 1883, at the age of sixty-five, alone and sitting in a chair. Only six or seven persons attended his funeral, where his one abiding friend, Friedrich Engels, read an oration.

Yet, today, his grave in Highgate Cemetery, London, is an international landmark for revolutionists, and he is famous for authoring a manifesto that did not even carry his name until twenty-four

years after its first publication. And the international movement which used him hides behind the name of Marx as it marches to power.

### *Looking Ahead*

Next week we will learn about the political and economic theories — popularly but erroneously known as Marxism — that support the revolutionary movement dedicated to destroying civilization, which has already been successful in enslaving more than one billion human beings and murdering hundreds of millions more.

### DURING THE WEEK

Ask family members to find several biographies of Karl Marx from encyclopedias, reference books, and high school or junior high textbooks. Compare these accounts with the facts given in this lesson. Discuss what is accurate, what is omitted, and the background and political slant of each author. Note also the adjectives used to describe Marx by each writer, and the general tone of the write-up. Is Marx described as brilliant? A genius? A humanitarian? Can any man be accurately described as "brilliant" who so grossly neglects his family that two of his children die of starvation?

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### The Family Heritage Series

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For parents who wish to teach their children the true meaning of liberty, responsibility, and our Americanist heritage.

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